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Chord and Cadence

CONSTANCE KENT

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...OPY,
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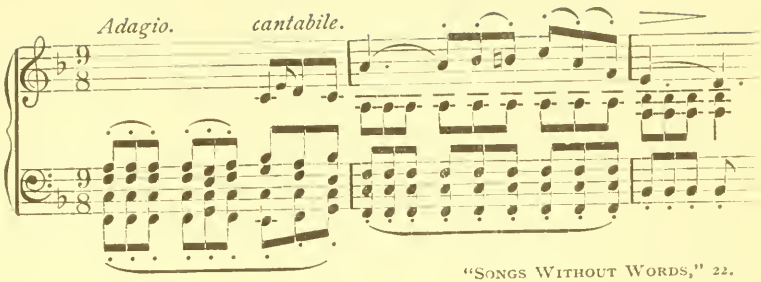


"Songs Without Words," 22.

Slowly at eventide pulses the sea
Like a heart that is weary—weary with futile endeavor;
Samson in manacles, blinded and impotent,
Nursing his vengeful wrath in the house of the aliens.
But his fury shall rise again, strong and free,
Blind and fierce, crashing the walls asunder—
Sparing not, pitying not,
Falling himself with the slain. — — —
Seek thou the peace that endureth forever,
Strong and free with the freedom of meekness.
Send thy waves to the help of the weary
The overborne, the weak and defenceless.
Stifle thy wrath lest it master thee,
And thy peace then shall flow like a river.

Anger wishes that makind had only one neck; love that it had only one heart; grief, two tear glands; pride two bent knees. *Jean Paul.*

THE VICTORY OF SINTRAM.

The castle hall of Drontheim was the scene of Christmas feast,
And while the hours ebbed apace, the tide of mirth increased;
Upon the rock-hewn table lay the head of gilded boar,
And rash and cruel were the vows the knights upon it swore.

But the bell of midnight clanged aloft, and, hunted from his bed
By the greedy spirit-hounds, the prince of Drontheim fled.
Along the vaulted arches far his cries of horror sound,
And he rushes in affright where the wassail bowl goes round.

Oh sad and fearful his lament! Oh dread his heart-wrung cry!
They chill the heart of every knight and warrior anigh.
"They will rend me! They will rive me! They will give me to the flame!
They will fling me into tortures, into plights I dare not name!"

A deathlike silence followed, but Biorn the Fiery-eyed
For maledictions new and fierce his startled memory plied;
"O hush thee sinful Baron! beware! it nears the end,—"
And kindlywise to Sintram turneth Rolf, his ready friend.

Strange words, and stranger calmness fall on the stricken soul,—
Words from the strange old story of one whom faith made whole,—
"I believe, and yet I cannot! I believe not, yet I would!—"
Fell in solemn cadence from the lips of Rolf, the Good.

Then the goading spectres from the troubled child depart,
And into quiet slumber sinks his weary trembling heart.
And forever in his weakness when the hellish crew appear,
Shall his safety lie in trusting, shall his danger lie in fear.

For the curse is still upon him, and until his manhood's prime.
Shall his soul be bent and harried, till he lift his front sublime;
Till the vulture of his nature don the plumage of the dove,
And he bends in pure obeisance at his mother's word of love.

Well for him Verena waited in the cloister calm and dim
While her strong affection burned in prayer, as tapers lit for him!
Well for us, in life's fierce struggle, that the guardian host unseen
With vigilance unceasing over heaven's bastions lean!

FORGIVENESS.

I walked athwart the grassy glade
What time the dew begemmed each tiny blade,
And every little spear was laid in rest,
And ruin threatened what my foot had pressed.
"Alas!" said I, "What damage have I wrought
In crushing down the life that harmed me not."
But the sweet sunrise of another day
Found it as fresh as e'er I passed that way.

I came, a shadow blotting out the day,
Among some children happy with their play,
And Grief came swiftly following in my track
And Joy had fled, I could not win her back.
"Alas!" wept I, "They never will forget,
But with reproach their eyes will aye be wet."
And lo! they greet me still with loving smiles,
And ease my sorrows with their merry wiles.

WINGS.

Soul of every mortal creature,
  Why this fever of unrest?
Why, amid life's satisfactions
  Seek'st those better still, and best?

Wherefore from the peaks of Ossa
  Stretcheth Pelion's sterner height?
Why the web thou weavest, coarser
  Than it seemed but yester night?

Had'st thou but the dove's strong pinions,
  Then thy soul with care opprest
Toward the bosom of the morning
  Swift would fly to be at rest.

But the dawn would turn to noon-tide,
  And the noon to quiet eve,
And thy baffled heart would falter,
  Weary, to the earth would cleave.

There, perhaps, some holy shelter
  Where thy aspiration keen
In the quiet of devotion,
  Rest and strength for flight may glean.

In the temple, in the closet,
  Rest thy wings, thou weary dove,
Then fly forth the world to conquer
  Strong in faith, in hope, in love.

IN MY HAMMOCK.

Swing low, my airy summer chariot,
Over the green fields fly,
While the soft passes of æolian mildness
Caress me as I lie.

Through the green arches of earth's cloisters
On to the distant blue—
Speed on, my chariot, till my weary spirit
Pauses and passes through.

There the vast reaches of etherial splendor,
Seas of eternal calm,
Wait the earth-wanderer, sorely laden,
To sooth him with their balm.

There, earth's fretting discords blending
With the tidal waves of love,
Make a diapason, swelling
Harmonies that float above.

Pause, my chariot, let me gather
Heartsease for the future days,
Hope from the auroral regions,
Light to brighten darksome ways.

Is not short pain well borne that brings long ease?
Sleep after toil, port after stormy seas,
Ease after war, death after life, doth greatly please.
—*Spencer's Fairy Queen.*

A NOONTIDE REVERY.

High noon it was, but still and gray
The sky o'er sea and meadow lay;
The silence of that summer day
Stole inward 'till I heard it say,—
"For God so loved the world."

A rose, pure-hearted, from her lips distilled
Sweet breathings which my senses filled:
His wreathed spear Gladiolus upheld
And every bird his message trilled,—
"For God so loved the world."

So loved it that He gave (as we
By giving show affection free)
Flowers, music, children,— blessed three,
A lovely earthly trinity,—
"For God so loved the world."

What know I yet of that surpassing grace
Whose tenderness in every flower I trace?
I read its alphabet in one dear face
But how humanity embrace?
"For God so loved the *world.*"

Pain could not measure love so great
Nor spear nor thorn could penetrate.
Love made thy dying so elate,
And opened wide the eternal gate
"For God so *loved* the world."

Surely He loved Thee, Princely Son,—
Yet freely gave His Only One.
His joy and Thine were but begun
In Thy last whisper "It is done,"—
"For God so loved the world."

If I for Him some cherished wish resigned,
Some dearly loved one to the altar bind,
His joy, but not His love I'd find,
That mystery, long-suffering, yet kind,
"For God so loved the world."

MUSIC VISIBLE.

If e'er the glorious infinite be mine
I'll learn the secret to create a flower.
No more contented with the meagre power
To image crudely such a work divine,
I'll deftly hinge each petal of the rose,
The glowing cup with attar over-fill,
And add to this fair creature of my will
But one sweet grace—a life that ever flows.

Or, if the flower be the written score
Of distant harmonies, and heavenly mirth,
I'll learn the intonations of that Voice
Which ranged the gamut of creative power,
Then called with song the flowers from the earth,
Voicing His joy, and bidding earth "Rejoice."

SYMPATHY OF SPRING.

"Proserpina—aut *violas* aut candida *lilia* carpit."

A severed love hangs veils before our eyes,
  A gloom that tinges all we see.
For other eyes the sun dispenses joy
  And hopefulness of things to be;
But not to those from whose sad heart and home,
  The light and joy of life has fled,
A life that all things touched and turned to gold,
  And cheered with wine life's daily bread

The brooding winds sob ever mournfully,
  And, poised upon the rain-full air,
The clouds withhold in self-restraint their tears
  From furrows turned with toil and care.
Spirits of Spring! that melts the heart of earth
  Ungirds the torrents of the hills,
Kisses to life the new-born birds and flowers,
  And smiles and sings in sunny rills,—

Why does thy vivifying hand first touch
  The willows with thy magic grace,
Uncoil their supple strands of greenness fair
  As if to veil thy tender face?
Or stirring with the sobbing, tearful breeze
  Its drooping branches writhe and strain
Like the loose tresses of a grief-bowed head
  That tosses, restless with its pain?

O thou who call'st the flowers from their graves
  To bloom in beauty rare and new,

Why sift through amethystine prisms
The light that gives the violet's hue?
And why through pathways of the prison-mold
In garb of stainless freshness bring
Star-like anemone, Lily of the Vale,
And Snowdrop, harbinger of spring?

O grieving heart! be full of cheer!
Lift up thy tear-strained eyes,
Let the full light of morning clear
Fall on thee from the skies.

"Blessed are they that mourn," we read,
"They shall sure comfort find,"
The sweetest care for those in need,
The thoughts from God's own mind.

Blossoms of amethysts and pearls
O'erhang Heaven's gateway bright,
And earth in sympathy unfurls
Her purple blooms and white.

The violet whispers, "All is well
Because I live, shall ye!"
A messenger of heaven to tell
Of immortality.

Beauty for ashes! for the heavy-hearted praise,
The solitary, desert places glad;
And when the morning sends its rays
The day is no more sad.

Each morn, a resurrection-morn;
Each night, repose of day;
Through Him who human grief has borne
The Life, the Truth, the Way.

TO HORACE'S CHLOE.

I see thee, fawn-eyed Chloe, sitting
By thy Roman mother's side,
While the tell-tale blushes flitting
Show thy young heart's bounding tide.
Never yet from that safe shelter
Has thy artless fancy strayed;
But the time is coming, Chloe,
As it comes to every maid.

Pure indeed are thy soft glances
As the earliest flowers of spring,
But they pierce the heart like lances
With a self-accusing sting.
Dost thou read the eyes that seek thee,
Trembling at the tale they tell?
But the time is coming, Chloe,
Thou shalt love their language well.

Keen the tender eyes that sue thee,
Keen to censure, as to praise,
His shall be the bliss to woo thee
In a long, heart-yielding gaze.
Think not, maiden, he would rend thee
As a wolf would rend the hind;
For the time has come, sweet Chloe,
With a mate thy life to bind.

AT NIGHT.

Come out with thy sweet Mother
And sob thy sorrow away,
And drink of the calming potion
She offers at close of day.

Well she knows the "home-pain"
That presses at dusky eve,
And lights her brightest candles
To cheer the hearts that grieve.

She spreads her book of pictures
Upon her ample knee,
And tells the starry symbols
Blazoned in light for thee,—

Heroes and gods and dragons
Drawn from the mythic lore—
The glory of God, down-shining
Through pin holes in His floor.

Soothed is thy mundane sorrow,
Lapped in the embracing blue,
"As one whom his Mother comforts
So will I comfort you."

No one is so much alone in the universe as the denied of God. With an orphaned heart which has lost the greatest of fathers, he stands mourning by the immeasurable corpse of nature, no longer moved or sustained by the Spirit of the universe, but growing in its grave. *Jean Paul.*

BEAUTY FOR ASHES.

The moon, slow-pacing through the ambient night,
Watches her happy rival, while she sleeps.
The pale hand-maiden for her vigil keeps
A silver radiance from the halls of light.
How sad a record of a hopeless doom
Shows in that marred and passion-wasted face!
Quenched are the fires, consumed each vital trace,
Her joy a memory, and her heart a tomb!

Not so the happy earth upspringing to the sun's embrace!
Deep in her veins the fires glow, but the light is on her face.
Bride of the day, she lingers not within the halls of night,
But singing on her journey goes, enamoured of the light.
And the spirits of immortals freed, when their day is done
Rise like the shining vapors on the ladders of the sun.

BLIND,

Eyes for the light! Light for the eyes!
The Voice that framed creation cries.
A chalice to lift where the fountain flows,
A mirror to image the tint of the rose.

"The eye for light! Light for the eye!"—
Divinely-ordered affinity.
It is not good for either alone,
The voice of the Blessed made them one.

Eyes for the light, light for the eyes,—
From the deeps of the sea to the dome of the skies:
Save in dank caverns under ground
Where eyeless things and no light are found.

My eyes were married once to the light,
But I walk in the widowhood now of night.
But the sweet features of the Day
Are painted on my brain alway.

Time and the Circle.

I scan the circle of the horizon's rim
And note the curling tide of life that flows
Through egg and seed to bird and perfect rose,
To egg and seed again—a circle dim.
Speeding their hoops of light, the frolic Hours
Tread the same meadows through returning noons,
While Earth slips through her circuit of the moons
And marks her stages by recurring flowers.
O Time, thou product of Titanic skill,
Tell us the meaning, flash thy sudden light
On all who hold thee but a worthless thing!
Thou art the pledge of all the heavens fulfil
To us who delve within the caves of night;—
Thou art the *Jewel*,— Eternity the ring.

"After Us, the Deluge."

Strange prophet, standing on the tottering heap
Of reigns iniquitous, and broken faiths,
Could see with bleared eye the coming doom
Which yet was hidden from more virtuous ken,—
A tossing flood of crimson human blood
Submerging empires and undoing states;
Thought not of remedy, only to postpone
To heads less guilty his supreme desert,
Adding his fuel to enkindle hate.
"The Deluge, after us,"— what breast unmoved
Can bear this basest issue of besotted lips?
No prismic Bow reminds this Louis of the pledge,
For lives inviolate, and of wrongs redressed,—
The aftermath of Chaos, smiling fair
Through tears, upon a world new-clad with hope —
Sprung from the whelming sea that quenched her woes.
Genesis 9: 2-7.

IDEALS.

Guardians of life,—strong Faith, strong Love,
  Ye paused one smiling morn
To guard my tent upon the plains,
  When Hope was born.

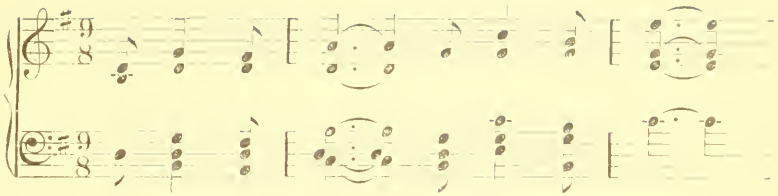
Fit groves for dalliance were there,
  And an enchanted spring,
And my full heart in its content
  Could nothing do but sing.

Next morn I struck my tent to pace
  The desert's burning floor,
And the sweet verities of palm and spring
  Became mirage — no more.

"What matters it?" the old Earth cries.
  "See, every budding spring
How o'er the scars upon my breast
  A vernal gauze I fling."

Full well, O Earth, I know my heart
  Doth not accord with thee:
And from my charmed, tho' tear-wet eyes
  The mirage will not flee.

And often in my dreams at night
  The oasis stretches free;
For Love and Faith, still lead me on
  And Hope is yet with me.



"Songs Without Words," 28.

Adown the lea, adown the lea
My heart's true love for me abideth,
And naught I fear, for far or near
My heart in love confideth.
A wayside shrine for me
Her cot shall be,
When o'er the darkling lea I wander,
A whitening bloom to me
The gloom shall be,
All light, all love, all joy, and wonder.

But happier dawn, thrice happy morn,
While buds and birds gush out a greeting,
To steal away to thee,
To fling a rose to thee,
The sweetest emblem of our meeting.
And then thou wilt come to me,
I will fill then my eyes with thee,
My dawn, my day, my star, my sun,—
My glory!—Love, with thee.

One of the best methods of rendering study agreeable is to live with able men and to suffer all the pangs of inferiority which the want of knowledge always inflicts. *Sidney Smith.*

WHO KNOWS?

Do fairies feed on lilies and dew? Who knows?
And elves with dreams our pillows strew,
And kobolds work in a grimy crew,
And trouble the miners, and good-folk too?
Who knows?

Do goblins spin the grain into gold? Who knows?
And dance at midnight on the wold,
And churn the cream to a yellow mold,
And puzzle the maids with their antics bold?
Who knows?

Who pricked a measure in the glade? Who knows?
In a faery ring in the mossy shade?
And a changeling in the cradle laid,
Whose tears were all into jewels made?
Who knows?

A skipper launched his boat one night
And sailed away in a track of light
Till he saw the moon, and it seemed to be
A boat of gold on a wide blue sea.

"Ship ahoy!" he shouted, loud and free;
"Go 'board her!" he said to his mariners three:
So they twisted some moonbeams into a strand,
And went straight up, hand over hand.

He gazed, and gazed, and at length he spied,
Three spots like flies on the good ship's side;
And then he thought it would be grand
To capture, and tow her back to land.

So he spliced his line to the cable bright,
And pulled at his oars till his head grew light.
When he opened his eyes, he was in his bed,—
He had sailed *that* voyage "out of his head."

He told me some of his ventures rare,
Of the prize-ship that melted into air.
Saint Elmo's Fire that stuck to the mast,
Till a pirate was hung to the yard at last.

Do I think his tale was true? Who knows?
It is true to you, little "Eyes-so-Blue"—
So cuddle down to your night's repose,
And a fairy shall sing to you, named "Suppose;"
She knows.

Shakspeare's Desk at Stratford.

O Berserk dreams of boyhood! Pirates ye,
Whose galleys cleave imaginary seas,
Unfurl their mystic pennons to the breeze,
And gather Paynim splendor for their fee!
E'en such an argosy our Shakspeare bore
To Prospero's isle, and Cleopatra's realm
While Ariel, bright spirit, pressed the helm
Far from the droning hum of schoolboy lore—
And the quaint carvings, hieroglyphs of fame,
Traced by the schoolboy in an idle hour,
Tell of swift voyages o'er fancy's main,—
Precursors of the master's coming power,
Which swept all seas, beggared the classic store
And reared Parnassus on the English shore.

WHITE SHIP.

White Ship, and starry sky,
  And the heaving midnight main,
And the mariner watching alone on high
  Shall he see the firm earth again?

White Ship 'mid a sunny sea
  Like the Virgin's garment, blue,—
Shall the strong hopes that beat in thee
  Prosper, or change to rue?

White Ship, and the tempest's gloom
  Making each visage gray,—
"Dies irae! Day of Doom"
  Is writ in the lightning's ray.

But greater than sea or sky
  The value of one soul;
And the good ship's freight to One on high
  Is more than the cosmic whole.

"The head is safe so long as the knees are supple."

It is better that joy should be spread out over the whole day in the form of strength than to be concentrated into ecstasies full of dangers, and liable to reaction. *Emerson.*

The vulgarest man while he suffers, prays, or trusts in Heaven would express himself like Homer, Tasso or Milton if education had clothed his thought in words. There are but two classes of men born — those who feel enthusiasm and those who deride it. *Madame de Stael.*

"TILL HE COME."

In the grey mist a Presence passed
  Intangible, but true,
Unerringly I knew Him
  And near my spirit drew.

In the dusk of sleep, such Purity
  Made the dim places plain
With hand on mouth, and mouth in the dust
  My soul has humbly lain.

And once a departing spirit
  Flashed a look of love to Thee,—
And I sat by, and understood
  More than my eyes could see.

In each day's tender gloaming
  Is heard life's undertone;
The dominant of the daytime
  Vibrates to a key of its own.

Am I grasping at a shadow?
  A shadow myself I shall be,—
A blessed shade in Elysium
  When He has come for me.

'Vain others' overthrows, who self doth overthrow.

Spencer's Faerie Queen.

It chaunst,— Eternal God that chaunce did guide.

Faerie Queen.

LULLABY.

Hush, my baby, fear no danger,
  God on high hath vowed to keep;
Angels guard thy quiet chamber,
  Angels kiss thee in thy sleep.

Mother loves thee, she will watch thee,
  She will hear thy slightest call,
Even as God who sits in Heaven
  Waits and watches over all.

See what tender care hath fashioned
  Every feature, every part,—
He who formed the wondrous creature
  Bears him daily on His heart.

Mother's love and care are fruitless,
  Thou art His, for life, or death;
He alone can tell the future,
  He continues every breath.

So my heart. cast off thy burden,
  God the Father loves thee, too:
He delights in trustful children,
  Like a babe would He have you.

Mankind are always happier for having been happy: so that if you make them happy now you make them happy twenty years hence by the memory of it. *Sydney Smith.*

HEAVEN.

In misty distance, far withdrawn
Rises the everlasting morn:
  And all the hopes of yesterdays
  Unite in its resplendent rays.

Hopes unfulfilled, and laid away
To wait the resurrection-day:
  Faiths in the human and divine
  Offered at the soul's true shrine.

Aye, more than that,— the golden mists
That all the fairy summits kiss
  Rise from the fires of sacrifice,
  Love's measure, and its price.

Hasten, O Heart, toward that morn!
Behold! the blessed Star of Morn
  Glimmers to guide thy willing feet
  Into the golden street.

The kingdom of heaven is not come even when God's will is our law; it is come when God's will is our will. While God's will is our law, we are but a kind of noble slaves; when His will is our will, we are free children.

MacDonald.

HYMN.

Hail! Thou ever-blessed Saviour,
Prince of Heaven, King of men!
Let the praise of men salute thee
On the throne where thou dost reign.

All the souls of men, enlightened
By the splendor of thy truth
From the grovelling of sinners
Stand ennobled by thy worth.

Smite the golden chords, ye Angels!
Answer them, Archangels high!
Till the farthest planet glories,—
In the Lord who came to die.

Hush! O human lips, and listen
To the never-ending strain,—
"Worthy of the highest glory,
Worthy is the Lamb once slain."

All religion is in the change from He to Thou.— Only with the Thou we know God. *Thomas Erskine*

The Spirit of God lies all about the spirit of man like a mighty sea ready to rush in at the smallest chink in the walls that hold Him out from his own; walls, which even the tone of a violin afloat on the wind of that spirit is sometimes enough to rend from battlement to base, as the blast of ram's horns rent the walls of Jericho.

George MacDonald.

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